(b) if so, the salient features of the MOU?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) has signed an agreement with M/s. Ahwaz Steel Complex, a unit of National Iranian Steel Company, for providing technical services and consultation to M/s. Ahwaz Steel Complex. KIOCL and the Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants (India) Limited (MECON) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding for providing jointly the requisite technical assistance to the Iranian Steel Plant.

Pending Steel Plants of Gujarat

8428. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for setting up of steel plant in the State of Gujarat is pending with Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for delay in according the approval; and

(d) by when this proposal is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Under the New Industrial Policy announced in July, 1991, 'iron and steel' industry has been removed from the list of industries reserved for public sector and has also been exempted from the purview of compulsory licensing, except for certain locational restrictions. No industrial licence is, therefore, required to set up a steel plant. No proposal is pending with Union Government for setting up a steel plant in Gujarat. As per the State Government of Gujarat, no such proposal is pending with them.

(b) to (d) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Setting up Steel Plant with Foreign Collaboration in Gujarat

8429. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up a Steel Plant in the State of Gujarat with any foreign collaboration in the near future;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the name of the foreign company; *and*

(c) the estimated cost and the capacity of the proposed plant?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Under the New Industrial Policy announced in July, 1991, Iron and Steel' industry has been removed from the list of industries reserved for public sector and has also been exempted from the purview of compulsory licensing except for certain locational restrictions. No industrial licence is, therefore, required to set up a steel plant. As per State Government of Gujarat, the State Government has no proposal for setting up a steel plant with any foreign company collaboration in the near future.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Release of CRC Coils to Traders/ Firms by SAIL

8430. SHRI KANAKSINH MOHANSINH MANGROLA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) have released pickled CRS coils to traders/firms in Delhi and Bombay at a price of non-pickled CRC coils during the last five years;

(b) whether it has been brought to the notice of SAIL that departmental enquiry has been conducted against the officials who were involved in this unfair practice with traders/firms; and

(c) what is the estimated loss incurred by SAIL during the last five years on this account in Bombay and Delhi and what action has been taken against the erring officials/traders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Iron Ore Export to Japan

8431. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been done on the easy availability of iron ore to the domestic steel industry;

(b) if not, whether such a study will be commissioned;

(c) whether it is a fact that the best iron ore have been earmarked for export to Japan; and

(d) if so, the details on arrangements of iron ore supply to Indian steel industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) :(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Steel had constituted a Task Force on Iron Ore in 1991 to inter-alia assess the likely demand and availability of iron ore in the country upto 2000 A.D.

(c) and (d) Under the long term agreement signed with the Japanese Steel Mills who are the major buyers of Indian Iron Ore, iron ore of different grades including high grade ore is exported to Japan from various sectors of the country. While committing annual quantities of iron ore under the said agreement, requirements of the Indian steel industry are kept in view.

Landed cost of imported steel

8432. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY:

SHRI V. RAJAN CHELLAPPA:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the landed cost of some 8 types of highly consumed oriented steel items of imported steel is much cheaper than Indian steel;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether lowering of rates of duty on these 8 items will have long term negative impact on Indian steel industry; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (d) The landed costs of almost all items of iron and steel including customs duty are today higher than the ex-stockyard prices of SAIL. However, with the reduction in customs duties on import of steel, the steel producers will have to improve their productivity and reduce costs to remain competitive.

Adverse Impact on VSP

8433. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any adverse impact on Visakhapatnam Steel Plant due to international competition;